The Use of Ancient Spolia in Byzantine Monuments: The Archaeological and Literary Evidence

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In Byzantium incorporation of spolia in new architectural compositions was often a means to convey a specific political message, such as the appropriation of the Roman past and the legitimacy of the new empire, or to create new aesthetic values, radically different from those of the orderly discipline of the classical art. Convenience in recycling earlier building material in new constructions was also an important consideration. In numerous cases a Christian reinterpretation of antique sculptures built in churches can be discerned: they often symbolized the defeated paganism and the victory of Christianity. Although superstitious beliefs were directly related with the pagan monuments, spolia reworked with crosses were presented as being Christianized and as symbolizing that the antique culture in all its manifestations had played a role in preparing the world for Christ's advent and had not been excluded from salvation.

> *Le Moyen Âge est, à sa façon, beaucoup plus complexe, connaissant la série plus que les unités discrètes (songeons aux peuples monstrueux, issus de Pline et de Ctésias que les tympans de Vézelay et d'Autun présentent comme accessibles à la parole divine), mais sachant aussi diaboliser le voisin le plus proche: la femme, le berger, le juif, l'étranger.*[1]

The reuse of earlier building material in secular and religious buildings was a very old practice. Its historical roots go as far back as early classical Greece: archaic statues were found in a deposit on the Acropolis of Athens buried by the Athenians after the Persian invasions, while on the north wall were incorporated various spolia from earlier buildings and column drums, still visible. It has been suggested that this arrangement was intentional, to remind people of the destruction of the temples of Athens by the Persians.[2] The example is remarkable because it points to the twofold use of spolia, practical and symbolic, in such an early age.

1. J. Le Goff, *L'imaginaire médiéval* (Paris 1985), 167.
2. R.E. Wycherley, *The Stones of Athens* (Princeton 1978), 106, 108.

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I. The early Byzantine period.

In the early Byzantine period there was an accelerated progress toward use of spolia: in the historical and cultural circumstances from the fourth century onward, dilapidation of monuments became a vogue. This process started with Constantine the Great. The reuse of reliefs from triumphal monuments of Trajan, Hadrian, and Marcus Aurelius in Constantine's arch in Rome has been interpreted as conveying a specific political message. Constantine was claiming the legitimacy of the great Roman emperors.[3] The use of other spolia, such as capitals and friezes from other buildings, in the same monument was, however, merely ornamental. In the Lateran church built by Constantine, a new aesthetic principle was introduced: *varietas*. The orders of the reused capitals, Corinthian and Ionian, alternate.[4] This asymmetrical arrangement is found in many early Byzantine churches, and it was expressing a new artistic style.[5] Later Byzantine texts praise the "variety" achieved in church decoration by the use of diverse columns from other buildings.[6] It is clear, therefore, that spolia could serve the

3. Cf. B. Brenk, "Spolia from Constantine to Charlemagne: Aesthetics versus Ideology," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 41 (1987), 103–6.
4. Cf. F.W. Deichmann, *Die Spolien in der spätantiken Architektur* (München 1975), 8 ff., 22; Brenk, "Spolia from Constantine to Charlemagne," 105.
5. P. van Den Ven, *La Vie ancienne de S. Syméon Stylite le Jeune (521–592)*, Subsidia hagiographica 32 (Bruxelles 1962), vol. I, 88 (c. 108): ἐπὶ τῷ γλύψαι ποικίλως τὰς κεφαλίδας τῶν κιόνων τῆς ἐκκλησίας ("for carving the capitals of the church columns in various styles"); J.-M. Spieser, *Thessalonique et ses monuments du IVe au VIe siècle. Contribution à l'étude d'une ville paléochrétienne* (Paris 1984), 210; *idem*, "Remarques sur Saint-Démétrius de Thessalonique," *Εὐφρόσυνον. Ἀφιέρωμα στον Μανόλη Χατζηδάκη* (Athens 1992), 568–9; W.B. Dinsmoor, Jr., "The Baptistery: its Roofing and Related Problems," in: *Studies in the Antiquities of Stobi*, vol. II, ed. J. Wiseman (Belgrade 1975), 15–25 (irregularity is observed in architectural parts such as the arches, and decorative elements); Christine Strube, "Die Kapitelle von Qasr Ibn Wardan. Antiochia und Konstantinopel im 6. Jahrhundert," *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 26 (1983), 59–106, esp. 98 ff.; *eadem*, *Polyeuktoskirche und Hagia Sophia. Umbildung und Auflösung antiker Formen, Enstehen des Kämpferkapitells* (Munich 1984), 43–52; R.H. Smith, A.W. McNicoll, "The 1981 Season at Pella of the Decapolis," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 249 (1983), 66 note that "almost no two capitals in the atrium of the civic complex church were alike"; C. Epstein, V. Tzaferis, "The Baptistery at Sussita-Hippos," *ʿAtiqot* 20 (1991), 91: variety of stone quality and colour of the baptistery's columns (first half of the fifth century) by the basilica in Sussita-Hippos; *Forschungen in Ephesos*, IV/1: E. Reisch *et al.*, *Die Marienkirche* (Vienna 1932), 1–9, 27–40: variety of the height of columns and types of bases and capitals of the church of the Virgin in Ephesos. F.W. Deichmann, "Säule und Ordnung in der frühchristlichen Architektur," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts. Römische Abteilung* 55 (1940), 114–130 points to the new aesthetic principle emphasized by the use of spolia (*"Anordnung"*).
6. E. Legrand, "Descriptions des oeuvres d'art et de l'église des Saints Apôtres de Constantinople: Poème en vers iambiques par Constantin le Rhodien," *Revue des Études Grecques* 9 (1896), 56, vv. 686–691. Cf. H. Saradi-Mendelovici, "Christian Attitudes toward Pagan Monuments in Late Antiquity and Their Legacy in Later Byzantine Centuries," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 44 (1990), 53.
7. The same principle of *varietas* is also found in the literary style in late antiquity: M. Roberts, *The Jeweled Style: Poetry and Poetics in Late Antiquity* (Ithaca, N.Y. 1989), 44 ff. (I owe the information to Dr. Leslie MacCoull.)

new artistic principle of "diversity" (*varietas*, ποικιλία) in contrast with the symmetrical discipline of classical art.[7]

The abandonment of temples and of municipal buildings on account of the Christianization of the empire and changes in urban administration and city-planning created the most favorable conditions for the use of ready building material in the early Byzantine period. The imperial legislation perfectly illustrates this trend. Imperial constitutions imposed restrictions on provincial governors who transferred statues, slabs of marble, or columns to their cities of residence to decorate them.[8] In 397 a decree ordered that building material from temples be used for the construction of bridges, aqueducts, and walls.[9] Dilapidation appears to have been a widespread phenomenon. According to another imperial constitution, stones, slabs of marble, and columns were removed even from tombs,[10] while their ornaments were taken to adorn banqueting halls or porticoes.[11]

In interpreting this phenomenon scholars looked first for economic reasons, the decline of supplies of materials, of craftsmanship, and of artistic production after the crisis of the third century.[12] Convenience was certainly a determining factor in recycling earlier building material.[13] This is the impression we gain from several imperial decrees. A passage of St. Gregory of Nyssa referring to the erection of a martyrium at Nyssa, seems to allude to the same reason: since it was time-consuming to cut the stones in the appropriate manner, clay bricks would be used as well as stones that could be found around. Thus time would not be wasted in adjusting the surface of the stones with one another.[14] Libanius attests that people were using stones of abandoned temples to build their houses, while columns were transported by ships or by chariots;[15] the columns of the temple of Asclepius in Cilicia, for example, were removed by Christians.[16] Given the poor state of preservation of early Byzantine churches in Greece, it is difficult to establish patterns of the use of spolia from the monuments. The best-preserved early Byzantine basilica built with spolia is the basilica of Sagri in Naxos (fifth century), at the site of a temple dedicated to Demeter.[17] Two thousand reused blocks have been counted incorporated in the group of churches of Katapoliani

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8. *Codex Theodosianus* XV. 1. 14 (*a.* 365); 19 (*a.* 376); 37 (*a.* 398); Nov. Maj. IV; *Codex Justinianus* VIII. 10. 2 (*a.* 222); 7 (*a.* 363).
9. *Codex Theodosianus* XV. 1. 36; XVI. 10. 16 (*a.* 399).
10. *Codex Theodosianus* IX. 17. 4 (*a.* 357; *Codex Justinianus* IX. 19. 4).
11. *Codex Theodosianus* IX. 17. 5 (*a.* 363; *Codex Justinianus* IX. 19. 5): *Sed et ornamenta quidam tricliniis aut porticibus auferunt de sepulchris.* Cf. also Saradi-Mendelovici, "Christian Attitudes," 50.
12. M. Johnson, A. Cutler, "Spolia," *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, ed. A.-M. Talbot (Oxford and New York 1991), vol. III, 1939.
13. Deichmann, *Spolien*, 91 ff.; *idem*, "Il materiale di spoglio nell' architettura tardoantica," in: *Corsi di cultura sull'arte ravennate et bizantina* XXIII (1976), 140 ff.; B. Ward-Perkins, *From Classical Antiquity to the Middle Ages. Urban Public Building in Northern and Central Italy AD 300–850* (Oxford 1984), 214–8.
14. Grégoire de Nysse, *Lettres*, ed. P. Maraval (Paris 1990), *ep.* 25.12 (p. 296 and n. 2 and 3).
15. *Or.* XVIII. 126, *Funeral Oration to Julian*, ed. R. Foerster, Libanius, *Opera*, vol. II (Leipzig 1904).
16. Zonaras, *Epitomae historiarum*, ed. M. Pinder, Th. Büttner-Wobst (Bonn 1841–1897), XIII. 12. 30–34.
17. M. Korres, *Πρακτικὰ τῆς ἐν Ἀθήναις Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἑταιρείας τοῦ ἔτους 1976*, vol. 2, (Athens 1976), 303–7.

in Paros (fifth-sixth century) and have been attributed to specific monuments. Eleven seats of the *proedria* of the theatre were reused for the *synthronon* of the fifth-century basilica and the Justinianic basilica.[18] In Olympia in the early Byzantine so-called *"bâtiment aux remplois,"* the walls of which are preserved up to 2 m. high, are used one hundred and thirty six blocks from the treasury of Sicyon and others from the Philippeion and the palaestra.[19] In the eastern provinces of the empire and in North Africa more churches are known built partly or entirely with spolia.[20] The dilapidation of ancient monuments to produce new building material in the early Byzantine period is vividly illustrated in the discovery of a mason's shop in the central ecclesiastical complex of Gerasa between the Fountain court and the temple of Artemis. Two columns were left cut in slices to make slabs for pavement or revetment, while some slices were half-sawn.[21] Another striking example is the Bath C in Antioch, which was probably dilapidated at the time of Justinian, and, as the excavator wrote, it "became like all other buildings at Antioch, a happy hunting ground for stone thieves." Bricks, marble floors, revetments, and even masonry from walls were removed. The trenches through which the brick facing of the caldaria has been taken out, indicate the method used. The excavator concludes, "There was such a wealth of material in this and other buildings, that the wreckers never wasted time, but carelessly pried out the material, breaking many of the bricks, the fragments of which were found scattered all through the lower stratum of débris, together with such stones from the core of the walls as had been dislodged and discarded, and many pieces of roof tiles."[22] The temple of Artemis in Ephesus was finally destroyed by St. John Chrysostom, when he visited the city in 403. It was subsequently dilapidated and inscriptions of the temple were used in the baths of Constantius and in the churches of St. Mary and St. John. A lime-kiln five m. in diameter was installed on the steps of Artemis' sanctuary and other huts in the immediate vicinity were apparently similar installations. In spite of the systematic despoliation, a great amount of sculptural ornaments had remained by the time of Justinian when statues and gorgon heads were transported to Constantinople.[23]

The evidence of the literary sources and the general impression with which we are left from the monuments suggest that to recycle earlier building material was more

18. "Chronique des fouilles et découvertes archéologiques en Grèce en 1982," *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique* 107 (1983), 811–812; "Chronique des fouilles et découvertes archéologiques en Grèce en 1983," *ibid.* 108 (1984), 818–820. Other early Byzantine basilicas on the Aegean islands on the sites of temples constructed with earlier building material are at Phana on Chios, on the Heraion of Samos, at the Colona on Aegina, Haghios Kirykos and Haghia Ioulitta on Delos, and the Karthaia church on Kea.
19. *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique* 107 (1983), 767 and fig. 42.
20. Cf. Deichmann, *Spolien; idem,* "Il materiale di spoglio," 131–146; H.-G. Severin, "Beispiele der Verwendung spätantiker Spolien. Ägyptische Notizen," in: *Studien zur spätantiken und byzantinischen Kunst, Friedrich Wilhelm Deichmann gewidmet,* ed. O. Feld, U. Peschlow, vol. 2 (Bonn 1986), 101–8. For detailed bibliographical references of spolia in Byzantine buildings in Pergamon cf. K. Rheidt, *Die Stadtgrabung,* vol. II. *Die byzantinische Wohnstadt* (Berlin 1991), 21 n. 174.
21. J.W. Crowfoot, "The Christian Churches," in: C.H. Kraeling, *Gerasa, City of the Decapolis* (New Haven 1938), 185.
22. C.S. Fisher, "Bath C," in: *Antioch-On-The-Orontes,* vol. I. *The Excavations of 1932,* ed. G.W. Elderkin (Princeton 1934), 19 and 20.
23. C. Foss, *Ephesus after Antiquity: A Late Antique, Byzantine and Turkish City* (Cambridge 1979), 86–87.

economical and more convenient than to produce new. However, recent reconstruction work on the Byzantine bathhouse at Scythopolis, built with spolia, offered an opportunity to draw conclusions which had not been anticipated. The archaeologists in charge of the reconstruction realized that the arrangement of reused material was not as simple as it is usually believed: "In the course of the work, it was found that the columns were of different sizes and that their bases and capitals were not uniform. Some of the bases rest on the stylobate, while others are sunk into it, and the capitals are of different types. These facts require a complex matching process in order to achieve a uniform height for the capitals. Evidently, when the Byzantine baths were constructed, extensive use was made of architectural elements of the Roman period and elaborate architectural planning was required, then as now, for setting up the portico columns."[24] Similar conclusions were drawn from the study of reused columns and capitals in churches of Cyrenaica.[25]

Such observations question the absolute value of the factor of "convenience" and the so-called decline of craftsmanship from the fourth century in the use of spolia. They also show that a more careful examination of the monuments may reveal other motivations of this practice. Historians, working independently, attempted to approach the same phenomenon in parallel terms: Christian emperors removed statues from various cities to decorate their new capital of Constantinople. Some of these statues were displayed for their artistic value,[26] others for their apotropaic power, while others offered a link with the Roman past and underlined the legitimacy of the new empire.[27] Even in the provinces we find that sometimes pagan statues had been maintained by Christians and displayed as objects of art. The Gymnasium of Salamis in Cyprus is an excellent example. After its destruction by an earthquake in the fourth century, several of its statues were preserved by the Christians. This must have occurred later, when by the sixth century paganism no longer constituted a threat. Some were mutilated in the naked parts of their bodies and were placed on new bases, while others were thrown into drains or built into walls.[28] From Caesarea in Palestine comes another interesting example of appreciation of antique statuary. In the sixth century two statues were taken from earlier buildings and were placed at the two corners of an open square. The one of porphyry, which probably depicted Hadrian, was mutilated when it was moved there; perhaps it was taken from the Hadrianeum. The other, made of white marble, probably was cut in half for transportation.[29] At Athens the

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24. R. Bar-Nathan and G. Mazor, "City Center (South) and Tel Iztabba Area," *Excavations of the Antiquities Authority Expedition. Excavations and Surveys in Israel*, vol. 11. *The Bet She'an Excavation Project (1989–1991), English Ed. of Ḥadashot Arkheologiyot*, Nr. 98 (1992), 42. Cf. also the thoughts of Brenk, "Spolia from Constantine to Charlemagne," with reference to the use of spolia in the monuments of Constantine.
25. Cf. R. Harrison, "The Building Materials of Churches in Cyrenaica," in: *Cyrenaica in Antiquity*, ed. G. Barker, J. Lloyd and J. Reynolds, BAR (= British Archaeologial Reports) International Series 236, 79 (Oxford 1985), p. 232.
26. Cf. Saradi-Mendelovici, "Christian Attitudes," 50.
27. Cf. Sarah Guberti Bassett, "The Antiquities in the Hippodrome of Constantinople," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 45 (1991), 87–96; *idem*, "*Historiae custos*: Sculpture and Tradition in the Baths of Zeuxippos," *American Journal of Archaeology* 100 (1996), 491–506.
28. Cf. A.H.S. Megaw, "Archaeology in Cyprus, 1955," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 76 (1956), suppl., p. 44; V. Karageorghis, *Scupltures from Salamis* I (Nicosia 1964), 4.
29. Cf. M. Avi-Yonah, "The Caesarea Porphyry Statue," *Israel Exploration Journal* 20 (1970), 203–

statues of the "Giants" were removed from the Odeion of Agrippa and placed on the north facade of the governor's palace in the fifth century. Several architectural parts of the palace also copy earlier buildings of the Athenian agora.[30] In the Praetorium in Gortys capitals with reliefs of mythological figures and animals were used in the building's new decoration in late antiquity.[31]

There is no obvious reason why the appreciation for ancient art which is manifested in all sources should not be extended—partly at least—to the use of spolia. Some imperial decrees seem to suggest that dilapidation of earlier monuments was not dictated only by convenience, but also by a desire to appropriate antique objects of art, the artistic value of which was very much appreciated.[32]

Deichmann has shown that in most instances the reused spolia were not concealed, but rather, even when they had been reworked, were conspicuously incorporated in new secular or Christian buildings. This was a new way of using spolia.[33] It appears, however, that spolia used in imperial buildings in the capitals of Constantinople and Ravenna were extensively reworked so that they were not easily recognized as such. This observation clearly reveals a specific symbolism conveyed by the use of spolia, since undoubtedly members of the palace milieu were able to afford new building material.[34] Outside the capitals the architectural compositions which were created by the artists working with antique materials were various. In the basilica EI in Sagalassos in Asia Minor, built in the fifth or early sixth century on the site of a temple of Dionysus, were incorporated blocks from at least three or even four pagan monuments. A frieze with pagan masks, of which only five survive, is incorporated into the east wall; in the interior the frieze contains dancing satyrs (Figures 1 and 2).[35] A Christian reinterpretation of these masks does not appear obvious. It may be that their

8; P.R. Diplock, "The Date of Askalon's Sculptured Panels and an Identification of the Caesarea Statues," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*, 103 (1971), 13–16; *idem*, "Further Comment on 'An Identification of the Caesarea Statues'," *ibid.* 105 (1973), 165–6; K.G. Holum, R.L. Hohlfelder *et al.*, *King Herod's Dream. Caesarea on the Sea* (New York and London 1988), 187: "Reuse of the statues indicates that, late in the sixth century, urban design at Caesarea was nostalgic and antiquarian—a look back at the classical past, to a world that was slipping away. Also instructive is the slipshod way in which the builders installed the two statues: they used makeshift bases and odd bits of stone to prop the statues up where parts of the original fabric were missing."

30. A. Frantz, *The Athenian Agora*, vol. XXIV. *Late Antiquity: A.D. 267–700* (Princeton 1988), 95–116, esp. 113.
31. Similar capitals can be seen in the neoclassical house in Heracleion, Lassithiou Str. 13/15: A. Di Vita, "Gortina 1986–1987," *Annuario della Scuola Archeologica di Atene* 64–65 (1986–87), 507–514.
32. Deichmann, *Spolien*, 99–100; *idem*, "Il materiale di spoglio," 144; Saradi-Mendelovici, "Christian Attitudes," 51. For the West cf. Ward-Perkins, *From Classical Antiquity to the Middle Ages*, 207 ff.; J. Alchermes, "*Spolia* in Roman Cities of the Late Empire: Legislative Rationales and Architectural Reuse," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 48 (1994), 167–178; Brenk, "Spolia from Constantine to Charlemagne," 103–9.
33. Deichmann, "Säule und Ordnung," 114; *idem*, *Spolien*, 3–5.
34. Ward-Perkins, *From Classical Antiquity to the Middle Ages*, 214–5.
35. L. Vandeput, "The Re-use of Hadrianic Architectural Elements in Basilica E1 at Sagalassos," in: *Sagalassos* I. *First General Report on the Survey (1986–1989) and Excavations (1990–1991)*, ed. M. Waelkens (Leuven 1993), 93–109, and fig. 77, 86.

function was merely aesthetic.[36] While in funerary monuments friezes with masks appear to have had an apotropaic function, in Asia Minor they are also found on public buildings where they were ornamental.[37] A similar conclusion has been reached from the study of the use of spolia in the basilica of the Virgin in Attaleia in Pamphylia: they were used as building material as well as ornaments.[38] From secular buildings the early Byzantine wall of Sparta provides a remarkable example. On its south side slabs and column drums were used to suggest a Doric frieze with metopes and triglyphs.[39] Compositions with new aesthetic values have been also observed in churches of Palestine and Syria.[40] In this respect the words of O. Lancaster in *Sailing to Byzantium. An Architectural Companion* best illustrate the phenomenon from the perspective of the visual experience of the modern viewer: "to the seeing eye, however, it is perfectly clear that so far from being haphazard, the arrangement of these antiquarian *objets trouvés* is as aesthetically meaningful as the disposition of the luggage labels and tram tickets in a *collage* by Kurt Schwitters."[41]

Theological interpretations of the phenomenon in the early Byzantine sources associate the use of spolia with the Church's victory over paganism. As several Christian writers interpreted the display of pagan statues in Constantinople and in other cities as permanent reminders of the pagan deceit and as a means to ridicule paganism, similarly spolia incorporated in churches could always point to the defeat of the old religion and glorify the new one. In this respect the *Life* of St. Porphyry by Mark the Deacon is explicit: since the decision was taken to build a church on the site of the Marneion, the saint ordered that the front yard be paved with slabs of marble from the most sacred part of the temple, so that people and animals would step on them.[42] Such

36. Deichmann, *Spolien*, 38–40; A. Grabar, *The Golden Age of Justinian. From the Death of Theodosius to the Rise of Islam*, transl. S. Gilbert and J. Emmons (New York 1967), 66–67. Similar appears to have been the function of a lion mask projected in the middle of an ornamental piece in the monastery of Saggara in Egypt. At the two extreme ends are two vessels from which grow vine branches, while above the branch to the left there is the inscription † σταυρὲ βοήθισον ("cross, help"). Apparently the lion mask was once part of a limestone basis for a vessel: Kl. Wessel, *Koptische Kunst. Die Spätantike in Ägypten* (Recklinghausen 1963), 22–27, fig. 23.
37. Cf. H. Möbius, "Interpretatio Celtica. Über Masken an provinzialrömischen Grabmälern," *Bonner Jahrbücher* 161 (1961), 141–154.
38. Cf. G. Grassi, "Scultura architettonica e *spolia* marmoree della Panaghìa di Antalya nel quadro della produzione artistica dell'Asia Minore meridionale in epoca paleobizantina," in: *Milion. Studi e ricerche d'arte bizantina. Costantinopoli e l'arte delle province Orientali*, ed. F. de'Maffei, C. Barsanti, A.G. Guidobaldi (Rome 1990), 73–134.
39. T.E. Gregory, "Fortification and Urban Design in Early Byzantine Greece," in: R.L. Hohlfelder, ed., *City, Town and Countryside in the Early Byzantine Era* (New York 1982), 56–57; *idem*, "The Fortified Cities of Byzantine Greece," *Archaeology* 35 (1982), 20 and fig. in p. 18.
40. G. Gualandi, "Bosra: La seconda campagna di scavi nella chiesa dei Ss. Sergio, Bacco e Leonzio," *Felix Ravenna* 115 (1978), 123: *"Non si tratta solo di un reimpiego di pezzi antichi come materiale bruto da costruzione, visibile ad esempio nel muro nord-sud scoperto durante gli scavi del 1976, formato anche da capitelli e cornici, ma anche di un sapiente adattamento dei blocchi antichi e della volontà tesa a attribuire nuove valenze compositive e semantiche ai fusti di colonna, basi, capitelli, cornici."*
41. (London 1969), 98.
42. Marc le Diacre, *Vie de Porphyre*, ed. H. Grégoire and M.-A. Kugener (Paris 1930), c. 76. Cf. also R. Van Dam, "From Paganism to Christianity at Late Antique Gaza," *Viator* 16 (1985), 1–20.

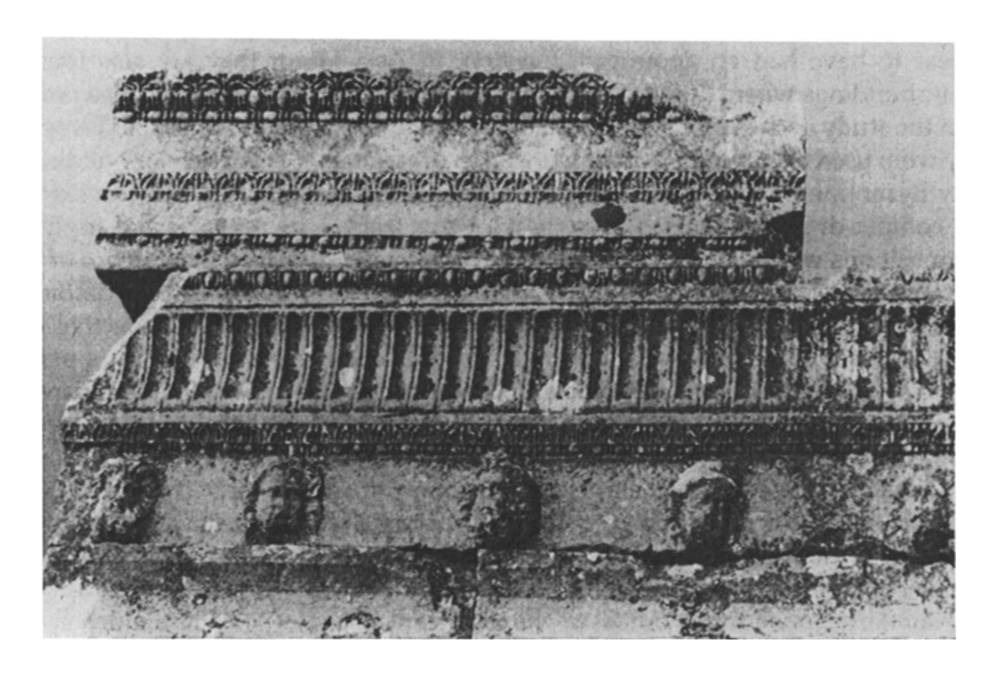


Figure 1

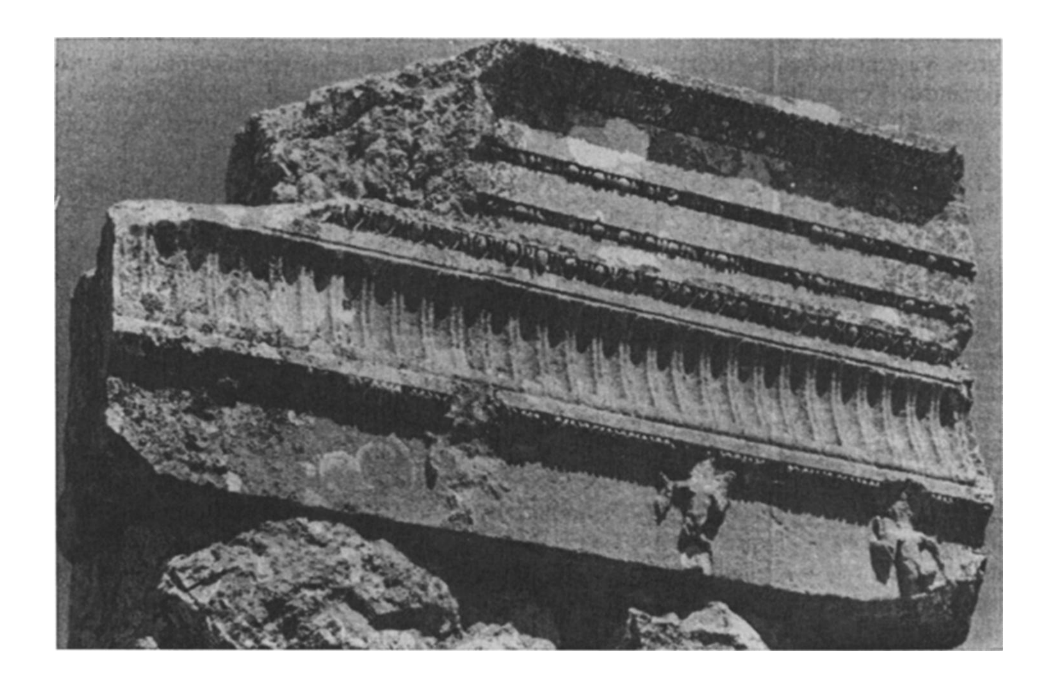


Figure 2

appears to have been the message conveyed by the spoils, including many inscriptions from the temple of Athene of Priene, built in the pavement of the city's large basilica.[43] Similarly the head of a Hellenistic statue of Zeus was probably intentionally broken and incorporated into the apse of the Justinianic church M at Sardis.[44] The flat reliefs incorporated into the monastery of Dēr el Abyad in Egypt have been interpreted as indicating the victory of the Church in the area where Shenoute, famous for his zeal against paganism, was active.[45] The phenomenon is also observed in rural communities. In the village Kafr Nābo in northen Syria, for example, statues from the destroyed temple were built into the fourth-century church.[46] Such a use of spolia in religious buildings, conveying the message of religious intolerance and victory over the defeated paganism, was not an unparalleled Christian practice: in the forecourt of Sardis's Jewish Synagogue a relief with Artemis and Cybele was placed upside down.[47]

In numerous other cases, however, pagan monuments were incorporated into Christian culture. The phenomenon must be placed into a broader context of reevaluation of ancient culture, literature, and philosophy in the new Christian empire. With a process of selection of values and principles, classical literature was valued by the Church Fathers, for it offered the necessary preparation for Christian life. Classical Greek literature also provided the model for the high literary style. A reconciliation with Greek philosophy was gradually achieved by Christian theologians. The view that pagan culture was part of a divine plan to prepare the world to receive the ultimate truth was firmly established. Eusebius's *Praeparatio evangelica,* while exposing the errors of paganism, offered a detailed analysis of the beliefs of ancient philosophers which opened the way to Christian faith.[48] Allegorical interpretations of pagan mythological themes continued to nourish the literary and artistic production of the early Byzantine centuries.[49] Ancient monuments, both buildings and statues, were powerful manifestations of ancient culture and could be "Christianized" on grounds of their artistic value or as valuable means of allegoric reinterpretation. Two epigrams by Palladas point remarkably to this process. In the first Palladas refers to a "conversion" of the pagan gods: statues, admired for their artistic value, were collected by aristocrats and thus were saved from destruction. In the second epigram there is a reference to the reinterpretation of the ancient Victory, now adapted to symbolize the victory in a Christian context.[50] Another means of incorporating the pagan past into the Christian world was to carve the sign of the cross on the forehead of statues, in

43. Th. Wiegand *et al., Priene. Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen und Untersuchungen in den Jahren 1895–1898* (Berlin 1904), 481–5.
44. G.M.A. Hanfmann, N.H. Ramage, *Sculpture from Sardis: The Finds through 1975* (Cambridge, Mass. and London 1978), 39.
45. Deichmann, *Spolien*, 54–60.
46. G. Tchalenko, E. Baccache, *Églises de village dans la Syrie du Nord*, vol. 1 (Paris 1979), 83.
47. G.M.A. Hanfmann, *Sardis from Prehistoric to Roman Times. Results of the Archaeological Exploration of Sardis 1958–1975* (Cambridge, Mass. and London 1983), 176.
48. Ed. K. Mras, *Eusebius Werke*, vol. 8: *Die Praeparatio evangelica* (Berlin 1956). For the various ways in which the classical tradition was incorporated into the Christian culture of Byzantium see also H. Saradi, *Aspects of the Classical Tradition in Byzantium* (Toronto 1995) with earlier bibliographical references.
49. Cf. W. Liebeschuetz, "Pagan Mythology in the Christian Empire," *The International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 2 (1995/96), 193–208.
50. *Anthologia Graeca* IX. 528; XVI. 282.

particular those of Roman emperors. It has been shown that the cross on the forehead stood for the *sphragis*, directly related to the baptism. Thus these statues were Christianized and the represented persons were included among the Christians. This use of the cross was positive and it was not meant to indicate that the statues were "neutralized." The fact that in particular statues of members of the Julio-Claudian dynasty received the cross on the forehead takes on a special significance. It probably indicates that they had been chosen by God to become part of his divine plan, since Christ came to earth during that dynastic rule.[51]

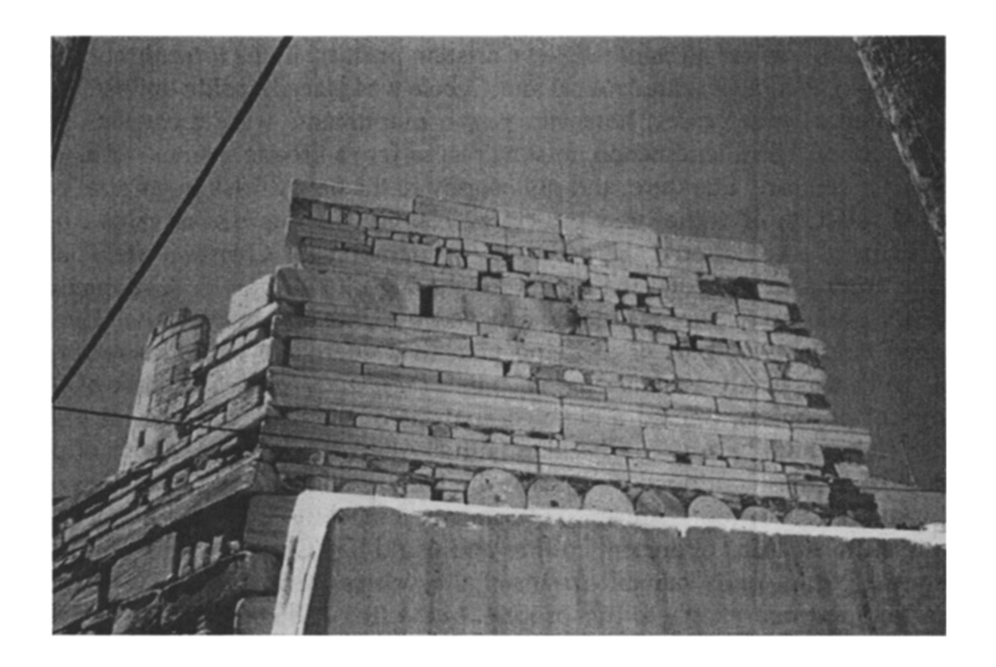


Figure 3

Construction of churches on the sites of pagan temples has been interpreted by Christian writers as a necessary step to purify them. Theodoret states that the materials of the pagan temples were sanctified by the erection of martyrs' churches.[52] Several hagiographical texts of the early Byzantine period describe how saints settled in deserted temples and fought against the demons who dwelt there. The victorious saints

51. Cf. Ø. Hjort, "Augustus Christianus—Livia Christiana: *Sphragis* and Roman Portrait Sculpture," in: *Aspects of Late Antiquity and Early Byzantium. Papers Read at a Colloquium Held at the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul 31 May—5 June 1992*, ed. L. Rydén and J.O. Rosenquist (Stockholm 1993), 99–112; C.A. Marinescu, "Transformations: Classical Objects and Their Re-Use during Late Antiquity," in: *Shifting Frontiers in Late Antiquity*, ed. R.W. Mathisen and H.S. Sivan (Cornwall 1996), 285–298. Cf. also A. Delivorrias, "Interpretatio Christiana: About the Boundaries of the Pagan and Christian Worlds," in: *Εὐφρόσυνον. Ἀφιέρωμα στον Μανόλη Χατζηδάκη*, 107–22.
52. Theodoret, *Graecarum affectionum curatio*, ed. I. Raeder (Leipzig 1904), VIII. 68: αἱ δὲ τούτων ὕλαι καθωσιώθησαν τοῖς τῶν μαρτύρων σηκοῖς ("their material has been purified by the relics of the martyrs").



Figure 4

purified the pagan sites by expelling the demons and by constructing churches.[53] In numerous pagan temples crosses were carved as a sign of purification.[54] There are some temples, however, part of which have been preserved in a new Christian architectural complex indicating an appreciation of the ancient monuments by the Christian builders.[55]

II. The middle and late Byzantine periods.

After the end of the early Byzantine period spolia continued to be used for construction of secular buildings and churches. In the dark ages (seventh and eighth centuries) the Byzantine walls of many cities in Asia Minor were built with extensive use of spolia. Archaeologists have recognized that their arrangement is ornamental.[56] The Byzantine walls of the period of the empire of Nicaea also contain numerous spolia.[57] In the encomium of Nicaea written by the emperor Theodore Ducas Lascaris, the city's fortifications are praised for their "most renowned material and excellent construction"

53. Saradi-Mendelovici, "Christian Attitudes," 54–55. On the other hand, numerous early Christian basilicas were built next to pagan temples offering "a challenge to the pagan sanctuary or a choice to those who came to worship": T. Gregory, "The Survival of Paganism in Christian Greece: A Critical Essay," *American Journal of Philology* 107 (1986), 237.
54. For example, the greatest temple of Priene, dedicated to Athene, was purified with crosses and Christian inscriptions on its steps (ἄμβροσις ἀνάστασις: "immortality, resurrection"): Wiegand, *Priene*, 84, 478. On the wall of the temple of Artemis at Sardis opposite a small early Byzantine church were inscribed twenty-five crosses and one with the inscription ΦΩΣ ΖΩΗ ("Light, Life"): C. Foss, "Byzantine Cities of Western Asia Minor" (Ph.D. Diss., Harvard University 1972), 95. Numerous crosses and the tree of life were inscribed on blocks in Delphi. Particularly remarkable are the dozens of crosses and nine circles engraved on the altar of Chios: P. Amandry, "Chronique Delphique (1970–1981)," *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique* 105 (1981), 740 and fig. 59, 60.
55. A. Machatschek, M. Schwarz, *Bauforschungen in Selge* (Vienna 1981), 109–110.
56. C. Foss, "Sites and Strongholds of Northern Lydia," *Anatolian Studies* 37 (1987), 84 ("Byzantine walls of the Dark Ages are usually faced with spoils arranged in regular courses in imitation of ashlar. In the 7th c. the facing is often elaborate and decorative, becoming simpler in the 9th"); *idem*, "Late Antique and Byzantine Ankara," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 31 (1977), 74: the facade of the castle was built with large blocks up to a hight of 8–10 m.
57. *Idem*, "A Neighbor of Sardis: The City of Tmolus and its Successors," *Classical Antiquity* 1 (1982), 191 ("column drums inserted in rows").

(τῆς περιφανεστάτης ὕλης καὶ ἐξαιρέτου τῆς οἰκοδομῆς).[58] This is a rare praise of a structure on account of the incorporated spolia in Byzantine sources. In Greece the remaining part of the medieval Frankish fortification of Paroikia in Paros is built entirely with material from the nearby ancient temple of Hera (Figure 3). Spolia also may be seen in several secular buildings in Mistra (Figure 4).

In numerous middle and late Byzantine churches slabs of marble, building blocks, and sculptural ornaments of antique buildings are incorporated into the walls without any order or any apparent iconographic or aesthetic program. They seem to have been used merely as building material. Such a use of spolia can be seen in the churches of Lygourio near Epidauros, especially that of St. Constantine (Figure 5). The lower part of the walls of the ninth-century church of the Virgin of Scripou in Boeotia was almost entirely built with spolia. Some contained inscriptions on the inside. Two rows of column drums are placed all along the upper part of the west wall of the entrance, and one row in the north wall.[59] In the tenth-century basilica at Mentzaina in Achaia, built on a Roman bath complex, the late antique Ionic capitals were used upside down as bases of the church's columns.[60] Ancient columns were placed in the piers supporting the dome of the church of the Virgin Paregoretissa in Arta, founded by the despot Nicephorus I Comnenus Doucas, his wife and his son *ca.* 1290.[61]

The most interesting integration of spolia in a Byzantine church is found in the Panaghia Gorgoepikoos or Little Metropolis at Athens (Figures 6 and 7). This church, dated to the twelfth century,[62] incorporates a great variety of antique and Byzantine sculptures which led to a range of interpretations: some scholars looked for an ornamental function, others discerned the antiquarian taste of Michael Choniates, the famous humanist bishop of Athens in the twelfth century; recently a different approach has been attempted and a symbolic interpretation of the sculptures based on Byzantine superstitious beliefs has been proposed.

The first scholars who studied the monument in great detail early in this century, K. Michel and A. Struck, have shown that the arrangement of the ancient and Byzantine spolia is symmetrical.[63] Indeed, while in the interior there are only a few large spolia and the way they were incorporated into the walls suggests that there they were used merely as building material, the arrangement of the spolia on the exterior walls,

58. *Theodori Ducae Lascaris Imperatoris in laudem Nicaeae urbis oratio*, ed. L. Bachmann (Rostock 1847), p. 1.5.

59. Maria Soteriou, "Ὁ ναὸς τῆς Σκριποῦς τῆς Βοιωτίας," *Ἀρχαιολογικὴ Ἐφημερίς* (1931), 119–157. It is difficult to establish whether this arrangement of spolia was expressing the antiquarian taste of the founder Leon, *protospatharios, epi ton oikeiakon* (on the founder and the Byzantine inscriptions of the church one of which, written in hexameter Homeric Greek, conveyed a specific political message, cf. N. Oikonomidès, "Pour une nouvelle lecture des inscriptions de Skripou en Béotie," *Travaux et Mémoires* 12 [1994], 479–493).

60. A.G. Moutzali, "Νεότερα στοιχεία από τη βυζαντινή βασιλική της Κοίμησης της Θεοτόκου, στη Μέντζαινα Αχαίας," *Ἀρχαιολογικὰ Ἀνάλεκτα ἐξ Ἀθηνῶν [Archaeological Selections from Athens]* 17 (1984), 29.

61. A. Orlandos, *Ἡ Παρηγορίτισσα τῆς Ἄρτας* (Athens 1963); L. Theis, *Die Architektur der Kirche der Panagia Paregoretissa in Arta/Epirus* (Amsterdam 1991), 56 ff.

62. A. Grabar, *Sculptures byzantines du Moyen Age* II *(XIe-XIVe siècle)* (Paris 1976), 96.

63. K. Michel, A. Struck, "Die Mittelbyzantinischen Kirchen Athens," in: *Mitteilungen des Kaiserlich Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Athenische Abteilung* 31 (1906), 279–324; P. Steiner, "Antike Skulpturen an der Panagia Gorgoepikoos zu Athen," *ibid.*, 325–341.

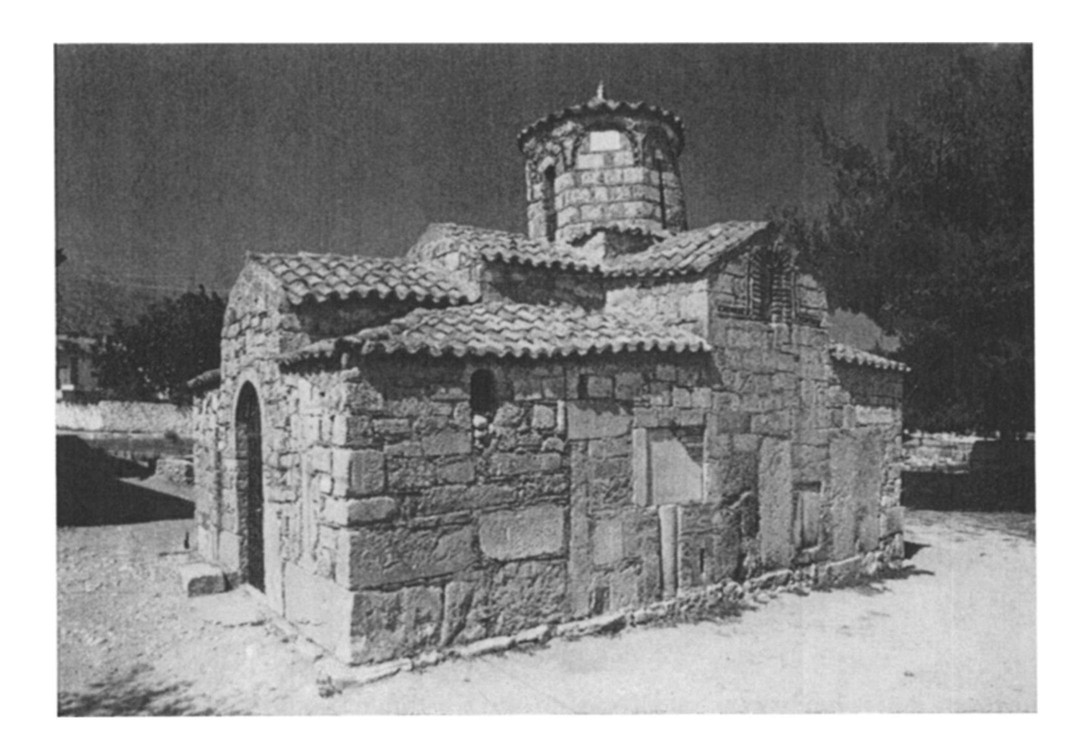


Figure 5

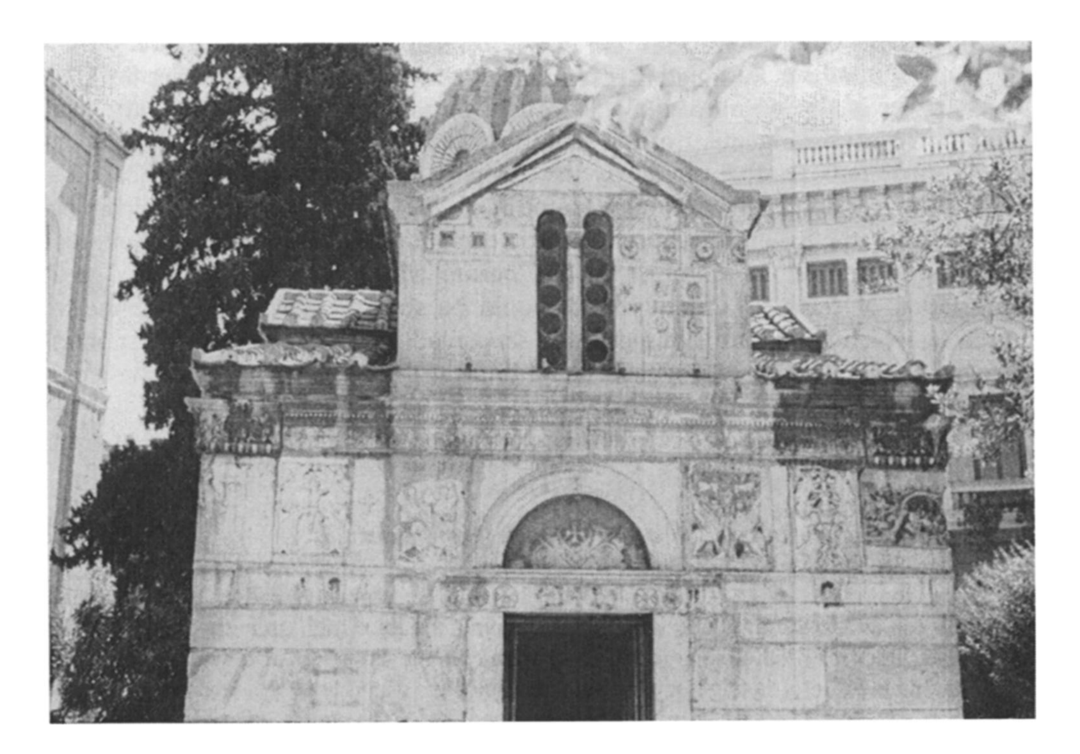


Figure 6

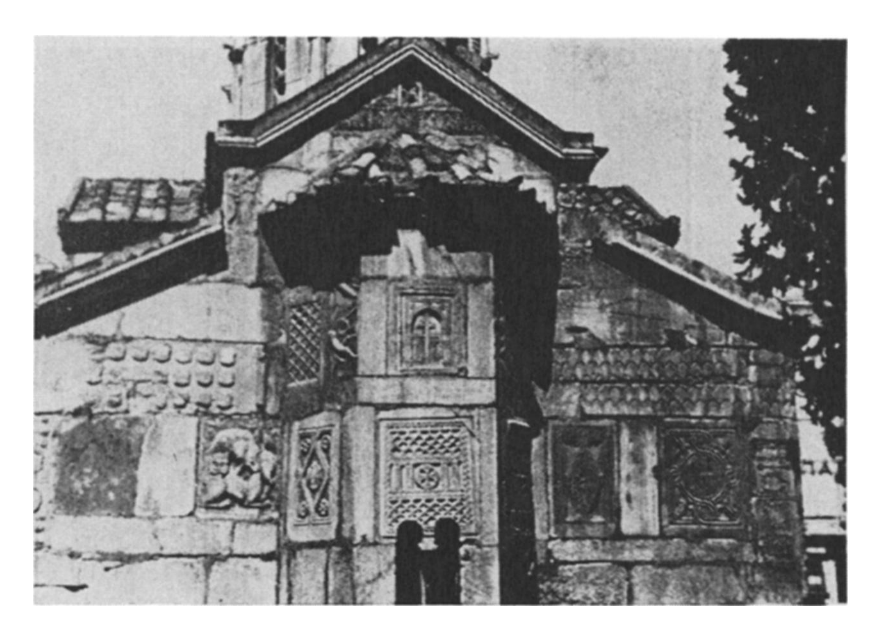


Figure 7

however, is not haphazard, and seems to serve a different purpose. M. Hatzidakis concluded that this arrangement intended to adorn the walls of the church,[64] and suggested that the church was perhaps built by Michael Choniates. Grabar studied the style of the sculptures which were taken from earlier Byzantine churches without attempting any interpretation of those with pagan motifs. He concludes that the overall arrangement of the spolia does not follow any iconographic program and does not imply any symbolism. Although the builders appear not to have paid attention to the diverse styles of the various sculptures which were incorporated into the same walls, the symmetrical arrangement of the sculptures, however, indicates an aesthetic concern. Grabar remarks that obviously the diversity of the sculptures (classical Greek, Roman, early and later Byzantine) was not in conflict with the aesthetic principles of the builders of the Byzantine church. He also concludes that this monument expresses the renewed interest in sculpture in this period which coincides with the greater appreciation of classical antiquity.[65] It should be stressed that this is not the only church in which spolia are symmetrically displayed. For example, we find a similar arrangement of eight blocks of sarcophagi built in the walls of two churches on the island of Scopelos.[66]

C. Mango, although he accepted the conclusion of Michel and Struck of a sym-

64. M. Hatzidakis, *Βυζαντινή Αθήνα* (Athens n.d. [1960]), illustr. 39.

65. Grabar, *Sculptures byzantines*, 96.

66. Two to the right and left of the apse of the church of St. Michael Synadon; three on the west wall—the two to the right and left ends of the wall, the third high up in the middle; another similar block of a sarcophagus is incorporated in the low part of a wall of the church Panaghia Eleutherotria (eighteenth century). They were decorated with an altar in the middle flanked by two garlands around a taurus' head each. The reliefs are unfinished. Cf. Ph. Bruneau, "Peparethia," *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique* 111 (1987), 471–494, esp. 483, 485 and figs. 10–12; C. Fredrich, "Skiathos und Peparethos," *Mitteilungen des kaiserlich Deutschen*

metrical arrangement of the spolia, suggested that they were used for convenience and their function could have been apotropaic. It is known that ancient statues were objects of superstitious beliefs: it was believed that they were inhabited by demons, and they had to be purified by Christians.[67] This belief, however, was shared by Byzantines of all social classes and of all levels of education as well as by pagans in the early period.[68] In any case, Mango denies that any attention was given to the subject of the sculptures of the Panaghia Gorgoepikoos.[69] H. Maguire further elaborates on the "apotropaic" nature of spolia from pagan monuments and suggests that the evil power of the sculptures incorporated in the walls of the Panaghia Gorgoepikoos at Athens was neutralized by the crosses and by being placed in the walls of the church.[70] He also uses as an argument Grabar's view that in general, zoomorphic sculptures in Byzantine churches had apotropaic character.[71]

In formulating this theory Grabar realized the conflict with a statement of the patriarch Nicephorus in the ninth century, who stresses that animals in church decoration were mere ornaments.[72] We find a similar view in a passage of Gregory of Nyssa in the encomium to St. Theodore which has apparently escaped the attention of art historians. The encomium contains a brief praise of the saint's church, and refers to the wooden zoomorphic sculptures among the other ornaments of the church.[73] Archaeo-

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Archäologischen Instituts, Athenische Abteilung 31 (1906), 99–128; A.J.B. Wace, "Skiathos und Skopelos," *ibid.*, 129–133; A. Sampson, *Ναοὶ καὶ μοναὶ εἰς τὴν νῆσον Σκόπελον* (Athens 1974), 31–4, 192–5.

67. Cf. Ph. Koukoules, *Βυζαντινῶν βίος καὶ πολιτισμός*, vol. 1, 2 (Athens 1948), 237–39; C. Mango, "Antique Statuary and the Byzantine Beholder," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 17 (1963), 55–75.
68. Saradi-Mendelovici, "Christian Attitudes," 55–56.
69. C. Mango, "Antique Statuary," 64 concludes: "What reason, other than convenience, dictated the ample re-use of classical carving in the church of Panagia Gorgoepekoos (Little Metropolis) at Athens, I am unable to say; whether the old stones were regarded as being στοιχειωμένα [haunted] or not, they were placed with no regard for their subject-matter except in such a manner as to form a symmetrical pattern."
70. H. Maguire, "Byzantine Art History in the Second Half of the Twentieth Century," in: *Byzantium. A World Civilization*, ed. A. Laiou, H. Maguire (Washington 1992), 143–4; H.P. Maguire, "The Cage of Crosses: Ancient and Medieval Sculptures on the 'Little Metropolis' in Athens," in: *Θυμίαμα στη μνήμη της Λασκαρίνας Μπούρα* (Athens 1994), 169–172. Thus he concludes (p. 172): "Such attitudes to ancient statuary make it likely that the pagan reliefs were not incorporated into the Little Metropolis because the builders admired their beauty, but because they feared them. Like the dangerous animals, the pagan sculptures were emphatically neutralized by their setting, by crosses and by circles. In a city that was as full of ancient statuary as Athens, this was surely a wise precaution."
71. *Ibid.*, 170–1; Grabar, *Sculptures byzantines*, 59. For the ancient origin of the belief of the apotropaic power of wild animals cf. Guberti Bassett, "The Antiquities in the Hippodrome of Constantinople," 89 n. 19.
72. *Antirrheticus* III, Patrologia Graeca 100, coll. 464–5. A. Grabar, "L'esthétisme d'un théologien humaniste byzantin au IXe siècle," in: *Mélanges Michel Andrieux = Revue des sciences religieuses*, vol. hors série (Strasbourg 1956), repr. in: A. Grabar, *L'art de la fin de l'antiquité et du Moyen Âge* (Paris 1968), vol. I, 63–69; *idem*, *Sculptures byzantines*, 16–17, 25.
73. Gregory of Nyssa, *Oratio laudatoria St. Theodori*, in: Patrologia Graeca 46, col. 737D: ἔνθα καὶ τέκτων εἰς ζώων φαντασίαν τὸ ξύλον ἐμόρφωσε ("here the sculptor carved the wooden images of animals"). On the meaning of *phantasia* ("image") in neoplatonic and Byzantine writers with reference to artistic production cf. G. Mathew, *Byzantine Aesthetics* (London



Figure 8

logical evidence from the early Byzantine period, which has not been taken into consideration in this discussion, deserves particular attention. Animal busts are represented in the capitals of the columns of several early Byzantine churches, such as, for example, those of the sixth-century basilica A at Caričin Grad (Justiniana Prima). The capitals are decorated with leaves of acanthus with the animal figures being found in the middle of the volute.[74] Chancel-screens were also decorated with animals in relief.[75] This type of decoration coincides with St. Gregory's information. In the sixth century John of Ephesus understands as ornaments the bronze animal heads placed below each of the roof beams of Zeus' sanctuary at Baalbek.[76] However, the animals flanking crosses in a church at Zelve in Cappadocia have been interpreted partly as symbolizing human domination over animals, and partly as survivals of ancient mythological beliefs (the Mother Goddess finds a parallel in St. Thecla among lions).[77]

Grabar dismissed the text of the patriarch Nicephorus as irrelevant for the new interest in animal motifs in the late Byzantine period. Thus he interpreted as apotropaic the frieze with animals on the lintel of the church of the Sts. Anargyroi at Kastoria. But it is important to note that Grabar did not propose a similar interpretation for the sculptures of the Panaghia Gorgoepikoos.

Of course all Christian motifs, especially in some specific contexts, always had a prophylactic or apotropaic function:[78] in particular the cross above doors and win-

1963, repr. 1965), 115 ff. On the Stoic doctrine of presentations (*phantasiai*) cf. M. Szymański, "P. Berol. inv. 16545: A Text on Stoic Epistemology with a Fragment of Antipater of Tarsus," *The Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 20 (1990), 139–141.

74. Vl. Kondić, Vl. Popović, *Caričin Grad. Utvrdjeno naselje Visantijskom Iliriku (Caričin Grad, site fortifié dans l'Illyricum byzantin)* (Belgrade 1977), 314. For other examples cf. E. Kitzinger, "List of early Byzantine Animal and Bird Capitals," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 3 (1946), 61–72.

75. Cf., for example, K. Weitzmann, ed., *Age of Spirituality. Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century. Catalogue of the Exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. November 19, 1977, through February 12, 1975* (New York 1979), 638; J. Russell, "Christianity at Anemurium (Cilicia). Recent Discoveries," *Actes du XIe Congrès International d'archéologie chrétienne*, vol. II (Rome 1989), 1626.

76. John of Ephesus, *Historia Ecclesiastica II. Analyse de la seconde partie inédite de l' Histoire Ecclésiastique de Jean d'Asie, patriarche jacobite de Constantinople (†585)*, ed. F. Nau, *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* 2 (1897), 490–1; See also Michael the Syrian, ed. J.-B. Chabot, *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, vol. II (Paris 1901), 262–3.

77. N. Thierry, "Remarques sur la pratique de la foi d'après les peintures des églises de Cappadoce," in: *Artistes, artisans et production artistique au Moyen Age. Colloque international. Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Université de Rennes II—Haute-Bretagne 2–6 mai 1983*, ed. X. Barral i Altet, vol. III. *Fabrication et consommation de l'oeuvre* (Paris 1990), 447–8.

dows of houses, a custom attested already in the early Byzantine centuries[79]—still preserved in older houses in Greece (Figure 8)[80]—or on city gates.[81] Prophylactic symbols and inscriptions should not always be understood as magic, in the proper meaning of the word.[82] To the difficulty of interpreting zoomorphic sculptures as apotropaic on the basis of the literary sources, another theological argument should be added, namely that the churches are *de facto* holy sites. Symeon of Thessalonica (1416/7–1429) explains that once the cross is planted in the foundation of a church, all the materials used for its construction, tiles, stones, wood, etc. become sanctified.[83] This expresses a rather positive attitude about the Christian cult places. It coincides with the more "optimistic" view predominant in Byzantine sources about God and man's salvation.[84] It also finds a parallel in the way wild animals are represented in the writings of the desert Fathers: in several stories the monks exercise their power over the beasts, in others they develop "a special relationship with animals."[85] Similar appears to have been the significance of other figures, such as personifications of nature's elements, in church iconography; they do not represent the conquered demons, but rather crea-

78. E. Kitzinger, "Christian Imagery: Growth and Impact," in: *Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century*, ed. K. Weitzmann (New York 1979), 147–160.

79 Cf. the sources cited in E. Dauterman Maguire, H.P. Maguire, M.J. Duncan-Flowers, *Art and Holy Powers in the Early Christian House* (Urbana and Chicago 1989), 18–19; J. Engemann, "Zur Verbreitung magischer Übelabwehr in der nichtchristlichen und christlichen Spätantike," *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 18 (1975), 42–43; or the bronze cross that once hung from the wooden door of a house at Stobi in Macedonia secunda and was found in the debris of the destruction level on the threshold: *Villes et peuplement dans l'Illyricum protobyzantin. Actes du colloque organisé par l'École française de Rome (Rome, 12–14 mai 1982)* (Rome 1984), 311. Crosses are also found on the threshold of the entrance of the central square martyrion of St. Babylas at Antioch: E. Kitzinger, "The Threshold of the Holy Shrine," in: *Kyriakon. Festschrift J. Quasten* II (Münster 1970), 638–647; Ph. Koukoules, *Βυζαντινῶν βίος*, vol. 4, 280 suggests a continuity with the ancient Greek custom of inscribing prophylactic and apotropaic inscriptions above the lintels of houses. Similar conclusion by R. Merkelbach, "Weg mit dir, Herakles, in die Feuershölle," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 86 (1991), 41–43.

80. Crosses are engraved above doors of modest houses of Emporio on the island of Santorini, a town that maintained architectural elements and planning of an earlier period; or in the metallic ornamental lintel of the main door of a wealthy residence, dated from an inscription on May 11, 1843, at Tripolis of Peloponnesus (44 Kypros Str.).

81. Cf. P. Lemerle, *Philippes et la Macédoine orientale à l'époque chrétienne et byzantine. Recherches d'histoire et d'archéologie* (Paris 1945), 86–91; Charlotte Roueché, *Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity* (London 1989), 185–6, no. 139.

82. Cf., for example, *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie. Chalcidique et Antiochène*, ed. L. Jalabert, R. Mouterde (Paris 1939), II, no. 424.

83. Patrologia Graeca 155, col. 337B. Cf. also J. Goar, *Euchologion sive rituale Graecorum* (Venice 1730, repr. Graz 1960), 487–8 that the cross implanted in the foundations of churches drives away the demons (εἰς ἀποτροπὴν δαιμόνων καὶ παντὸς ἐναντίου: "to avert demons and every enemy").

84. Cf., for example, W. Treadgold, "Taking Sources on Their Own Terms and on Ours: Peter Brown's Late Antiquity," *Antiquité Tardive* 2 (1994), 157.

85. Cf. Susan Power Bratton, *Christianity, Wilderness, and Wildlife. The Original Desert Solitaire* (Scranton, London, and Toronto 1993), 165–171.

tures obeying God with respectful fear.[86] The apotropaic interpretation of animal motifs would imply that popular superstitious beliefs introduced into church decoration had escaped censoring by the church patrons, namely the ecclesiastical administration. Alternatively it could be that an interplay of elite and popular beliefs took place. Such an interpretation has been suggested for the capitals of the church of Sta. Maria in Trastevere, rebuilt by Pope Innocent II between the years 1140 and 1143. The capitals with heads of pagan gods were taken from the baths of Caracalla. One can only speculate on what was expected to be read by the mediaeval viewer in these figures. It appears that the capitals were arranged in such an order as to allow a Christian reinterpretation. But among these capitals with the heads of pagan gods, the volute of another capital is decorated with the carving of small snakes. It has been suggested that this was the initiative of a "modest craftsman who tried to produce a capital 'like' the ancient figured capitals"; and that this was a "spontaneous reaction" to the pagan motifs, perhaps "to outright fear."[87] Another interesting example from Greece should be added in this discussion: a lion head, a spout of the fourth century B.C., was placed above the door of the church of the Virgin in the so-called monastery of Agnountos (10 km northwest of Epidauros). Above it is carved a cross with the inscription IC XC NIKA.[88] The inscription indicates the Christianization of the pagan piece. It may also indicate that the animal has been overpowered by Christ, as Thierry suggested for the animals in the church in Zelve in Cappadocia. Most probably, however, the inscription refers to the Psalm 90 (91): 13 (. . . . καὶ καταπατήσεις λέοντα καὶ δράκοντα)[89], traditionally interpreted Christologically. We may find a parallel in some early Byzantine amulets depicting a rider and a large lion underneath his horse with the inscription εἷς Θεὸς ὁ νικῶν τὰ κακά ("one is the God who overpowers the evils"). On the other side is the image of the evil eye attacked by beasts.[90] In the exorcisms of St. Basil snakes and scorpions symbolize evil, and the demon may have the face of a beast.[91] Finally the submission of the animals to God and consequently to men is referred to in the exorcisms of St. Basil.[92] But the cross or other Christian symbols or inscriptions above

86. Cf. the convincing observations of J.M. Spieser, "Remarques complémentaires sur la mosaïque de Osios David," *Διεθνὲς Συμπόσιο. Βυζαντινὴ Μακεδονία 324–1430 μ.Χ. Θεσσαλονίκη 29–31 'Οκτωβρίου 1992* (Thessaloniki 1995), 295–306, esp. 302–4.

87. D. Kinney, "Spolia from the Baths of Caracalla in Sta. Maria Trastevere," *The Art Bulletin* 68 (1986), 379–397, esp. 396.

88. M. Getakos, *'Η μονὴ 'Αγνοῦντος* (3rd ed., Athens 1979), 29. This could be compared with the sculptures above the entrance of the church of St. Anne at Trebizond (884–5): G. Millet, "Les monastères et les églises de Trébizonde," *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique* 19 (1895), 434.

89. "And you will subdue the lion and the dragon."

90. Cf. H. Maguire, "Garments Pleasing to God: The Significance of Domestic Textile Designs in the Early Byzantine Period," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 44 (1990), 216–7; G. Vikan, "Two Byzantine Amuletic Armbands and the Group to which They Belong," *The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* 49/50 (1991/92), 33–39, and n. 22: in the back of one ring-amulet with the figure of the Holy Rider are inscribed the opening letters of Psalm 90.

91. Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 579, 580 (δρακοντοειδὴς ἢ θηριοπρόσωπος: "with the shape of a dragon or the face of a beast").

92. Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 582: δὸς τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ὑπακούειν τετράποδα, καὶ ἄλογα ζῶα· ὅτι σὺ ὑπέταξας αὐτὰ Κύριε ("allow men to subdue the quadruped and irrational animals; for you submitted them, Lord").

animals should not always be interpreted as purification of a pagan motif. In the Patria of Constantinople we learn that on the Chalke of the palace were placed the two horses brought from the temple of Artemis by Justinian, and a cross which would give stability to the structure (καὶ τὸν σταυρὸν διὰ τὸ ἑδραῖον).[93] In the church of St. Sophia in Trebizond the winged bird with a cross at the top of his head and the inscription ὁ ἅγιος Μάρκος (Saint Mark) is apparently the symbol of the evangelist St. John.[94] D. Talbot Rice has shown that the inscription wrongly identifies St. Mark with the eagle, symbol of St. John.[95] This church has several other striking sculptures. The south porch has a frieze with the Genesis. The inscribed texts from Genesis 2:8, and from the Lenten Triodion suggest that iconography and texts corresponded to a specific liturgical function of the south porch.[96] The other sculptures, however, according to Talbot Rice, are of decorative nature: a winged gryphon or a winged centaur shooting a bow. Talbot Rice concluded that the origin of the sculptures is oriental. In the church of St. Anne in Trebizond there is a relief with a flying figure and a warrior with the dedicatory inscription from the year 884–5 (Figure 9). Mango suggested a Christian reinterpretation of the relief.[97]

It is important to reconsider several essential data which have been ignored or overlooked in the discussion of the interpretation of spolia in the church of the Panaghia Gorgoepikoos. First, it has been shown that the Byzantines believed that not only pagan statues but all statues were inhabited by demons.[98] Second, in Byzantine sources buildings, bridges, caves, rivers, and tombs, of course not necessarily pagan ones, were places in which demons or spirits were living.[99] The Euchologion of the Ortho-

93. *Scriptores originum constantinopolitanarum*, ed. T. Preger (Leipzig 1851), Πάτρια Κωνσταντινουπόλεως, c. 28 (pp. 165–6). Cf. also Goar, *Euchologion*, 583: ὁ πήξας τὸν σταυρὸν εἰς στήριγμα ἓν καὶ σωτηρίαν κόσμου ("Christ who established the cross, as the only support and salvation of the world"). For a parallel from the early Byzantine period cf. an inscription from the church at Androna (El-Anderîn) of Apamene, † ἐν τῷ θεῷ τεθεμελίωμε, ἐν Χριστῷ ἐστήριγμε, ἐν τῷ Ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι περιτετήχισμε.... ("I am founded in God, supported by Christ, surrounded as by a wall by the Holy Spirit...."): *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie*, IV. *Laodicée. Apamène*, ed. L. Jalabert†, R. Mouterde (Paris 1955), no. 1677.

94. The association of the four biblical creatures (man, lion, ox, eagle) with the four Gospels was made by Irenaeus (Patrologia Graeca 7, coll. 885–6). On the pictorial association of these four symbols with the Evangelists cf. R.S. Nelson, *The Iconography of Preface and Miniature in the Byzantine Gospel Book* (New York 1980), 15–53.

95. D. Talbot Rice, *The Church of Haghia Sophia at Trebizond* (Edinburgh 1968), 50.

96. Cf. Linda Safran, "The Genesis Frieze at Trebizond," *Twentieth Annual Byzantine Studies Conference. Abstracts of Papers* (Ann Arbor 1994), 29.

97. Millet, "Les monastères et les églises de Trébizonde," 434; Mango, "Antique Statuary," 63.

98. Cf. Saradi-Mendelovici, "Christian Attitudes," 56. Superstitious beliefs about statues and icons were very old: C.A. Faraone, *Talismans and Trojan Horses. Guardian Statues in Ancient Greek Myth and Ritual* (New York and Oxford 1992); on the prophetic power of statues, an ancient Roman belief, see John Lydus, *De Ostentis*, ed. C. Wachsmuth (Leipzig 1897), p. 16 ll. 14–16: Ὅταν μὲν γὰρ ἱδροῦν ἢ δακρύειν δοκῇ ἀγάλματα ἢ εἰκόνες, ἢ ὅταν κάμινος ἢ ἰπνὸς περιπεφρυγμένος ἐκλάμψῃ, στάσεις ἐμφυλίους ἀπειλεῖ ("when statues and images appear sweating or shed tears or when a scorched oven or furnace flashes forth, it is a sign of civil wars"); p. 102 ll. 7–12.

99. John Lydus, *De mensibus*, ed. R. Wuensch, IV. 82 (p. 134 ll. 4–7) refers to idols, ghosts and demons which inhabit tombs.



Figure 9

dox Church suggests the only way to neutralize them: special prayers pronounced by the priests.[100] Although no specific prayers are suggested to expel demons from pagan statues, it is difficult to understand why such "demonic" stones should be included in the churches in order to have their demons fly away.

In the church of the Panaghia Gorgoepikoos at Athens, the symmetrical arrangement of the spolia as analyzed in the detailed study of Michel and Struck must be appreciated and correctly evaluated. Also it should be noted that the sculptures were re-worked at the time of the construction of the church,[101] which of course could not explain why the Byzantine builders took so much trouble over "demonic" stones. Another element also deserves examination: the south wall of the church was covered

100. Goar, *Euchologion*, 580, 583–4.

101. Hatzidakis, *Βυζαντινή Αθήνα*; Michel and Struck, "Die Mittelbyzantinischen Kirchen Athens," 308. For the West cf., for example, Th.W. Lyman, "Format and style: The adaptation of cartoons to reused marble at Saint-Sernin," in: *Artistes, artisans et production artistique*, vol. III (Paris 1990), 223–233.

with plaster with frescoes and was still visible when in the nineteenth century Gailhabaud made some drawings.[102] Of course it may very well be that the frescoes on the exterior were added after the thirteenth century by a bishop who found the sculptures inappropriate. They may also be *post*-Byzantine. But if the church was covered with plaster and Christian frescoes from the time of its construction, then apparently we are dealing with a different phenomenon, a hidden symbolism well attested in various Christian monuments including churches from the early period. Another equally important element which has been ignored in the discussion of the use of spolia in this church is that it was built on the site of a pagan temple of Eileithyia, goddess of childbirth.[103] Her name survives today in the Christian name of the church, that of St. Eleutherius (the liberator).[104] It is obvious therefore that the use of spolia with explicit pagan figures, Christianized with crosses, could convey a particular message: the Christianization of a pagan site. Specifically in this church, it may also be that the circles, which have been interpreted as having the power to neutralize demons,[105] have some stylistic relation with the ancient motifs associated with the Gorgon, with which the name of the Panaghia Gorgoepikoos may be connected.[106] No attempt has been made to interpret the relief with the pagan feasts and zodiac signs on the west wall of the Panaghia Gorgoepikoos (Figure 10). It seems reasonable to suggest that the feasts could correspond with the Byzantine practice of banquets after the liturgy in front of the churches, attested in sources from the early period on.[107] They may also have a spiritual interpretation.[108] The zodiac signs also may have been given a Christian meaning: in several Byzantine works of art they symbolize good or evil.[109] Thus it

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102. Cf. G.A. Soteriou, *Εὑρετήριον τῶν Μεσαιωνικῶν μνημείων τῆς 'Ελλάδος*. Μέρος Α. 1. *Μεσαιωνικὰ Μνημεῖα 'Αττικῆς*. Α.*'Αθηνῶν* (Athens 1927), 71; J. Gailhabaud, *Monuments anciens et modernes* (Paris 1850), vol. II, I. An example from the early Byzantine period is the cemeterial church attached to the temple of Artemis at Sardis, with the exterior originally stuccoed and painted: G.M.A. Hanfmann, H. Buchwald, in: G.M.A. Hanfmann, *Sardis from Prehistoric to Roman Times* (Cambridge, Mass. and London 1983), 195.
103. Pausanias I, 18, 5.
104. Michel and Struck, "Die Mittelbyzantinischen Kirchen Athens," 314 ff.
105. Maguire, "The Cage of Crosses," 172. Cf. also *idem*, "Magic and Geometry in Early Christian Floor Mosaics and Textiles," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 44 [=*'Ανδριάς Herbert Hunger zum 80. Geburtstag*] (1994), 265–274.
106. Cf. Michel and Struck, "Die Mittelbyzantinischen Kirchen Athens," 317–8.
107. G. Gordon, "Textes coptes relatifs à Saint Claude d' Antioche," Patrologia Orientalis 35, 4 (Turnhout 1970), 583–7. For the later centuries cf. Sp. Vryonis, Jr., "The Panegyris of the Byzantine Saint: A study in the nature of a medieval institution, its origins and fate," in: *The Byzantine Saint. Univ. of Birmingham Fourteenth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies*, ed. S. Hackel (London 1981), 201, 225.
108. H. Musurillo and V.-H. Debidour, *Méthode d' Olympe. Le banquet* (Paris 1963); Engl. transl. by H. Musurillo, *St. Methodius. The Symposium. A Treatise on Chastity* (New York 1958).
109. *Διονυσίου ἱερομονάχου ἑρμηνεία τῆς ζωγραφικῆς*, ed. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus (Athens 1909), 213–4. Cf. G.M. Hanfmann, "The Continuity of Classical Art: Culture, Myth, and Faith," in: Weitzmann, ed., *Age of Spirituality*, 81–82. For the Jewish tradition cf. G. Foerster, "Representations of the Zodiac in Ancient Synagogues and their Iconographic Sources," *Eretz-Israel* 18 (1985), 380–391; L.A. Roussin, "No Constellations for Israel?", *Thirteenth Annual Byzantine Studies Conference, Abstracts of Papers* (Columbus, Ohio 1987), 37–38 who concludes that the Helios-in-zodiac in Synagogues represents the celestial sphere.

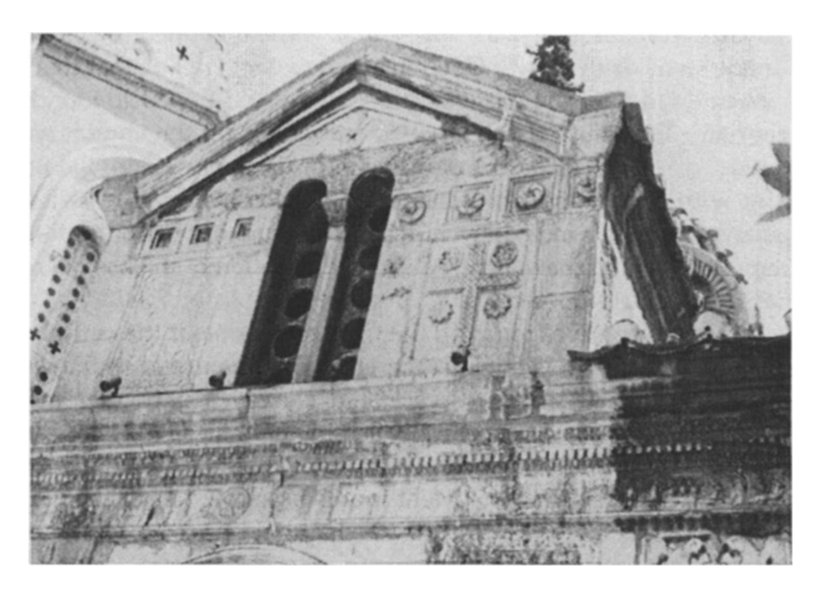


Figure 10

is possible that the pagan reliefs of the facade received a Christian reinterpretation.

A theological interpretation may explain the position of reliefs with explicit pagan motifs on the east end of the north wall of some churches. In the Panaghia Gorgoepikoos the most striking pagan figure, that of a naked satyr, a unique case as far as we know, flanked by two crosses, is placed in this position (Figure 11). In a church of the Virgin at Nauplion, built on a pagan site, we find in the same position a pagan relief with the scene of a libation on an altar (Figure 12). In the church of Merbaka in the Argolis, also built on the site of an ancient temple, various spolia have been incorporated into the

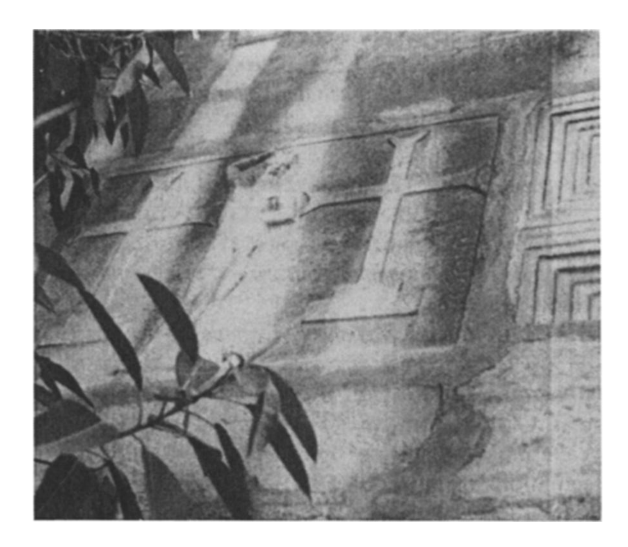


Figure 11



Figure 12

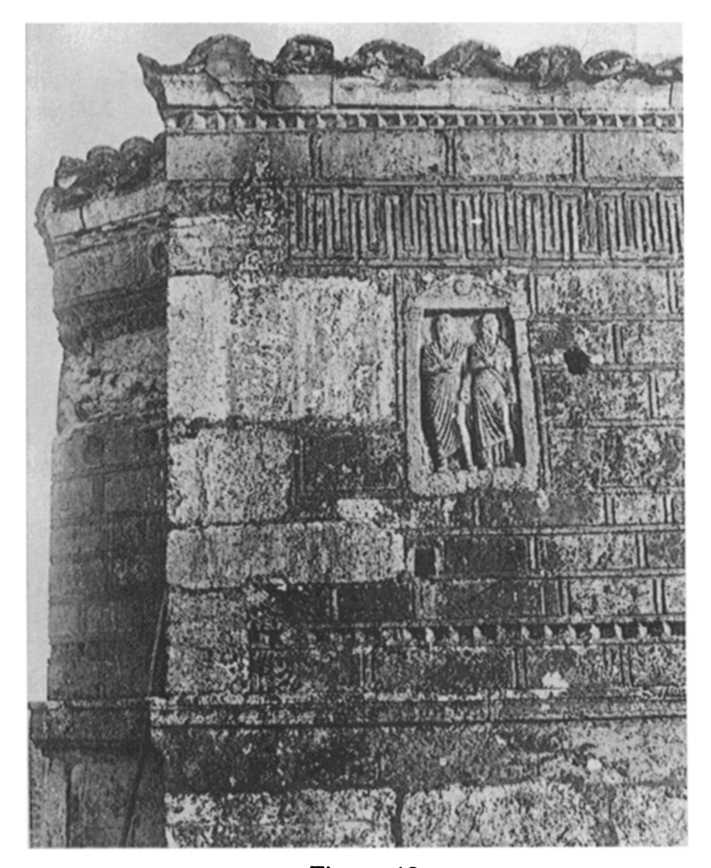


Figure 13

walls.[110] Two are tombstones with inscriptions (Figure 13).[111] They are placed on the east ends of the south and north walls in a way to correspond. On the east wall to the north, there was a votive relief, lost already by the time Struck studied this church.[112] The choice of such compositions in the northeastern corner of these churches demands an interpretation. The scene with the bloodless sacrifice in the church of the Virgin at Nauplion may allude to a dignifying aspect of the pagan religion. Since the *prothesis-skevophylakion* was placed in the northeastern corner of Byzantine churches, the position of spolia with explicit pagan scenes just above the site of the *prothesis* takes a particular significance. Theological texts clarify the symbolism of this part of the churches' sanctuary.[113] Patriarch Sophronius, for example, in his commentary on the liturgy explains that

> The skevophylakion on which the offering takes place suggests the site of Kranion, as it has been announced to Abraham when he was piling up the pieces of wood, on which he placed his son, and he brought the ram. The priest standing alone in the church, while the hymn of the Cherubim is chanted, shows a sign (*typos*) of the Father awaiting the advent of the Son.[114]

Patriarch Germanus (715–730) elaborates on the same idea in greater length.[115] Later Symeon of Thessalonica explains that the *prothesis* being in the corner symbolizes the place of the Nativity in Bethlehem.[116]

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110. A. Struck, "Vier byzantinische Kirchen der Argolis, Plataniti, Chonika, Merbaka und Areia," *Mitteilungen des Kaiserlichen Deutschen Archaeologischen Instituts, Athenische Abteilung* 34 (1909), 208–9.

111. *Inscriptiones Grecae* IV, 539, 647.

112. "Monuments d'antiquité figurée, copiés à Argos par les membres de la commission et expliqués par M. le Bas," in: A. Blouet, *Expédition scientifique de Morée . . . .*, vol. 2 (Paris 1833), pp. 109 ff., and pl. 62; F.G. Welcker, *Alte Denkmäler. Die Giebelgruppen und andre* [sic] *griechische Gruppen und Statuen* (Göttingen 1849), vol. 2, 271–2, and pl. XIII, 24; Struck, "Vier byzantinische Kirchen der Argolis," 209.

113. On the theological developments expressed in art cf. D. Olster, "Byzantine hermeneutics after Iconoclasm: Word and Image in the Leo Bible," *Byzantion* 64 (1994), 419–458.

114. Sophronius, *Commentarius liturgicus*, Patrologia Graeca 87, 3, col. 4001A: Τὸ σκευοφυλάκιον ἐν ᾧ γίνεται ἡ προσκομιδή, ἐμφαίνει τὸν τοῦ Κρανίου τόπον, καθὼς προετυπώθη τῷ Ἀβραὰμ ὅτε ἐστοίβαζε τὰ ξύλα, καὶ ἔθηκε τὸν υἱόν, καὶ ἀνήνεγκε τὸν κριόν. Ἱερεὺς μόνος ἱστάμενος ἐν τῷ ναῷ τοῦ χερουβικοῦ ὕμνου ᾀδομένου, τύπον δεικνύει τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐκδεχομένου τὴν του Υἱοῦ προέλευσιν. In other theological texts Abraham symbolizes the advent of Christ. See, for example, "Les trois derniers traités du Livre des Mystères du ciel et de la terre," ed. S. Grébaut, Patrologia Orientalis VI, 3 (Paris 1911), 436–8. On the *prothesis-skevophylakion* and its function in the liturgy cf. R.F. Taft, *The Great Entrance. A History of the Transfer of Gifts and other Preanaphoral Rites of the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom* (Rome 1975), *passim*, esp. 181 ff.; T.F. Mathews, *The Early Churches of Constantinople: Architecture and Liturgy* (University Park and London 1971), 158 ff. and *passim*.

115. Patrologia Graeca 98, coll. 396 C-D, 400 B.

116. *Ibid.*, 155, col. 348 A: Ὁ ἐκ πλαγίου δὲ τοῦ βήματος τοῦ σκευοφυλακίου τόπος, ὃς καὶ λέγεται πρόθεσις, τὴν Βηθλεὲμ καὶ τὸ σπήλαιον διαγράφει. Ὅθεν καὶ ὡς ἐν γωνίᾳ ἐστί, καὶ τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου οὐ πόρρω, εἰ καὶ πορρωτέρω ἐν τοῖς μεγάλοις ἦσαν ναοῖς διὰ τὴν φυλακὴν τῶν σκευῶν . . . . ("The place of the *skevophylakion* beside the sanctuary, also called *prothesis*, symbolizes Bethlehem and the cave of the Nativity. Therefore, as it stands

Thus, it becomes clear from these texts that the northeast part of the Byzantine church had strong religious significance, indicating the incarnation of God and the salvation of man as it has been announced in the Old Testament. It is tempting therefore to suggest that the reliefs with explicit pagan motifs placed in the northeast corner of some Byzantine churches had a specific meaning: like Judaism, ancient culture was part of the divine plan; it opened the way to Christianity. In the Panaghia Gorgoepikoos the victory of the Church is also stressed by the incorporation in the north wall of several pieces which have been identified as belonging to an altar.[117]

There are some other Byzantine churches which display a remarkable arrangement of sculptures. The head of a male statue is incorporated into the tower by the gate of the wall that surrounds the monastery of Agnountos. On the dome are visible two more heads, one of a male statue on the northeast side, and a female on the southeast.[118] Fragments of statues can be seen in the south wall of the courtyard of the bishop's palace at Mistra. On both sides of the central arch and above the two supporting columns is placed a long cross. The bust and the legs of a statue are placed just above the cross on the right side, and one head of a statue above the other cross on the left (Figure 14). These are probably post-Byzantine additions. A sarcophagus with Dionysiac scenes is displayed in the same courtyard (Figure 15).[119]

The continuation of the tradition is remarkable especially in Anatolia[120] and in Greece, where antique spolia are still used in some houses, churches, and monasteries, particularly in the countryside. A. Di Vita stressed the continuity of the tradition in modern Greek popular architecture. In the Basiliou Mélathron, the house of the highly educated and humanist bishop Basil in the first years of this century, at Haghioi Deka, many ancient spolia, capitals with reliefs, and terracotta ornaments with the bust of Hermes were used.[121] A stele with a scene of a banquet, probably funerary, is incorporated in the facade of a house in the town Glossa in Scopelos (on the street Papadiamantes).[122] In the monastery of Areias or Nea Mone, dedicated to the Theotokos, at the site of the ancient fountain of Kanathos near Nauplion, capitals are placed as

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in the corner, and not far from the altar, although in the past it was placed even further in the large churches for safeguarding the holy vessels . . . .")

117. Michel and Struck, "Die Mittelbyzantinischen Kirchen Athens," 308 ff. Apparently the tradition was old; an altar of Sarapis was incorporated into the northwestern corner of a church in Limyra in Asia Minor (fifth to sixth centuries): R. Jacobek, "Byzantinische Forschungen," *Kazi Sonuçlari Toplantisi* 11, 2 (Ankara 1989), 192 and pl. 13a (208).

118. Getakos, *Ἡ μονὴ Ἀγνοῦντος*, 17, 77 (and illustration), 90–91.

119. The reuse of pagan sarcophagi by Christians is attested already in the early centuries: R. Farioli, "I sarcofagi ravennati con segni cristologici: contributo per un completamento del 'corpus' II," *Felix Ravenna* 13–14 (1977), 131–159, esp. 134. A rare use of a sarcophagus with the inscription νείκας τύχη πρασίνων ("the fortune of the Greens wins") as an altar, probably with relics, is found in the large basilica in Priene's centre by the Roman gymnasium: Wiegand, *Priene*, 483. For the western Middle Ages cf. X. Barral i Altet, "Le destin médiéval des sarcophages d'Aquitaine," *Antiquité Tardive* 1 (1993), 161–4; Lucilla De Lachenal, *Spolia. Uso e reimpiego dell'antico dal III al XIV secolo* (Milan 1995), 133–4.

120. Cf., for example, the adornment of the entrance door of the Kümbet Camii (1274–5) between Ankara road and the town of Sivrihisar with fragments of the templon architrave of a Byzantine church: C. Mango, "The Pilgrimage Centre of St. Michael at Germia," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 36 (1986), 117–132, esp. 131–2, and fig. 29–30.

121. Di Vita, "Gortina," 514.

122. Bruneau, "Peparethia," 483.



Figure 14

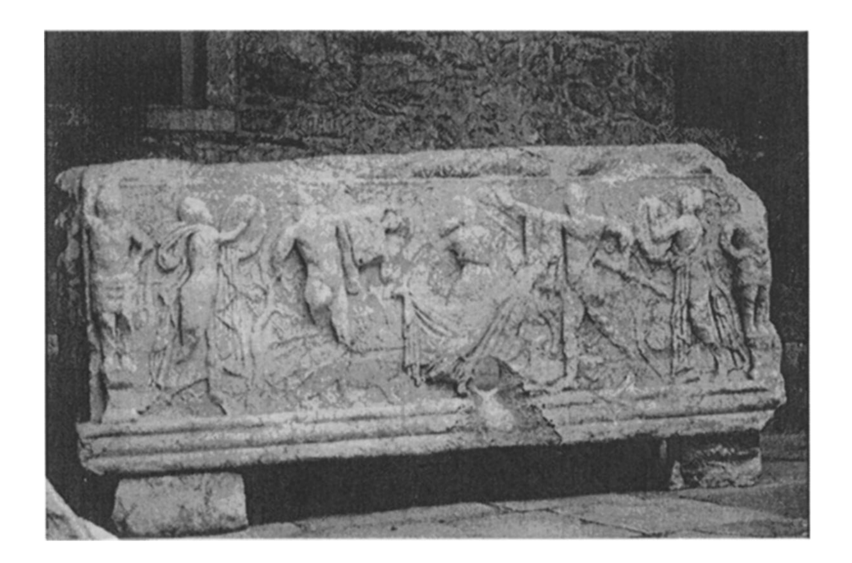


Figure 15

bases for a modern bench in the courtyard, while various other spolia are displayed on a low wall of the court as "ancient" (Figure 16).[123] Convenience should have dictated the contemporary use of a piece of ancient column as basis for the *prothesis* in the sanctuary of the small church of St. Constantine in Paroikia in Paros (Figure 17). Part of a column and an ionic base on top of it are placed to the right of the entrance of the

123. On this monastery cf. Struck, "Vier byzantinische Kirchen der Argolis," 189–236; G. Chora, *'Η "'Αγία Μονή" 'Αρείας ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησιαστικῇ καὶ πολιτικῇ ἱστορίᾳ Ναυπλίου καὶ Ἄργους*, Ph.D. Diss., Univ. of Athens (Athens 1975).

chapel of Haghios Panteleimon serving as a support basis or table.[124] Archaeological excavations have revealed that in several early Byzantine churches column drums were used as bases for the sanctuary's table.[125] In the church of the Virgin in the small town of Emporio in Santorini, a large marble vase from ancient Phera has been transported to the church a few decades ago, and it is still used for the *hagiasma*! It is decorated with a frieze of bulls' heads and vine leaves. It is interesting that its pagan motif, as well as its origin, do not cause problems to the local priest who performs the liturgy. A parallel can be found in the Baptistery of Ravenna. There a second-century urn of a diameter of about 85 cm. and depth about 40 cm. was probably used for baptismal water before 1785. It is decorated with two naked winged putti holding a garland. Around these figures there are bows, arrows, and crossed torches, while an eagle with open wings is depicted under each handle.[126]

The attitudes which these more recent and contemporary practices reveal indicate that the line between pagan and Christian was not always clear, and that the physical proximity to and accessibility of the ancient monuments were certainly a determining factor in incorporating them into the churches. In this respect the church of St. Photeine at ancient Mantineia in the Peloponnesus, built in 1970 from spolia and decorated with ancient mythological scenes, demonstrates the antiquarian taste of the modern architect. It was inaugurated in 1977, and a discussion to change its "pagan" iconography of the interior started only in 1993.

We have seen that the use of spolia in Byzantine monuments had a multifold significance. Spolia incorporated in imperial buildings aimed at underlining Rome's

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124. Bruneau, "Peparethia," 487 and fig. 17. We find a similar use of column bases in antiquity: the upper part of a column base from the temple of Athene in Priene was used as a table in the northwestern section of the city's gymnasium: Wiegand, *Priene*, 283–4.

125. In the church of bishop Markianos near Gerasa's hippodrome, built in 570 with spolia, a small column with a marble slab on it was placed by the east wall to serve as an altar: M. Gawlikowski, A. Musa, in: F. Zayadine, *Jerash Archaeological Project. 1981–1983* (Amman 1986). In the small chapel of a middle Byzantine basilica in Maroneia in Greece, built on the ruins of an early basilica, the basis of a column placed upside down, and a broken small column of the templon were used for the altar: Ch. Bakirtzis, "Σύναξη Μαρωνείας," *Τὸ Ἔργον τῆς Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἑταιρείας κατὰ τὸ 1987* (Athens 1988), 23. Various other antique blocks used as tables include even grave markers: a Roman tombstone was used as a table support in a small church (sixth to seventh centuries) in the village of Kalavassos in Cyprus (A. Papageorghiou, *Annual Report of the Dept. of Antiquities for the year 1989* [Nicosia 1990], 56).

126. S.K. Kostof, *The Orthodox Baptistery of Ravenna* (New Haven and London 1965), 141–2, and fig. 124. The use of objects of pagan art for the *hagiasma* appears to have been a rather recent practice. At the end of the early Byzantine period (sixth to seventh centuries) the Byzantines were disturbed by such a practice: *Theophylacti Simocattae Historiae*, ed. C. de Boor, revised by P. Wirth (Stuttgart 1972) I. 11. 3 ff.; *Vie de Théodore de Sykeon*, ed. A.-J. Festugière (Brussels 1970), c. 42. But in some other instances such a use was clearly suggesting the victory of the Church. At Salona, for example, a pagan altar was placed upside down and hollowed to hold the holy water in the basilica of Anastasius: E. Dyggve, *History of Salonitan Christianity* (Oslo, Cambridge, Mass., and London 1951), 9–10; at Horvath Hesheq in upper Gallilee a small altar with a dedication to Jupiter Heliopolitanus was broken and a cavity was cut to place burning incense or a lamp in the sixth-century church: L. Di Segni, "Horvath Hesheq: The Inscriptions," in: *Christian Archaeology in the Holy Land. New Discoveries. Essays in Honour of Virgilis C. Corbo* (Jerusalem 1990), 385–7.



Figure 16

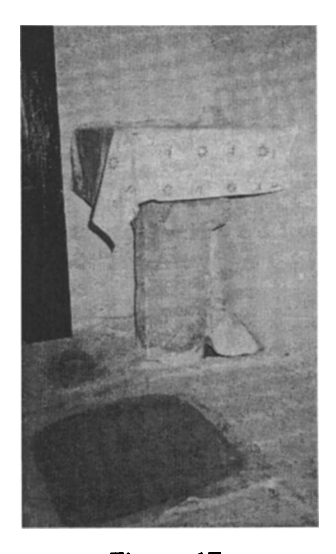


Figure 17

legacy to the new empire and the legitimacy of the emperors of the East. By employing pieces of various styles in new constructions, a new aesthetic value was created, that of *varietas*, contrasting with the order of classical art. The decline of the provincial administration in the early Byzantine centuries and the abandonment of public buildings offered ideal circumstances for recycling earlier building material. The factor of "convenience," however, should not be overly valued, since it has now been shown that the construction of new buildings with heterogeneous material was more complex than it is generally believed. It also appears that the use of spolia should be associated with the nostalgic appreciation of antique art. It is clear that spolia were incorporated in many new buildings, especially churches, as mere architectural ornaments. This is particularly observed in the symmetrical arrangement of spolia in Byzantine churches. In addition, incorporation of spolia into churches has been interpeted by Christian sources, especially Lives of Saints, as symbolizing the victory over paganism. But in numerous other cases pagan monuments were included in a Christian context and thus Christianized. The cross carved on the forehead of statues has been interpreted as symbolizing their baptism and the acceptance of the represented figures into the Christian community. Although the apotropaic nature of pagan statues is revealed by various literary sources, such a function of spolia incorporated into churches is not supported by theological sources which define churches as sacred sites. To the contrary, a Christian reinterpretation of spolia in Byzantine churches becomes apparent, when such monuments are evaluated in the light of evidence from the literary sources. A special symbolism of spolia with explicit pagan scenes placed in the north-east corner of churches is suggested by theological texts, interpreting the site of the *prothesis* as alluding to Christ's advent. Thus the "Christianization" of spolia incorporated into

Christian churches is in accordance with a long Christian tradition of selection and reinterpretation of antique culture and literature.[127]

List of Illustrations

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3. (p. 10) Frankish fortification at Paroikia in Paros (photo by the author).
4. (p. 11) Column base incorporated in a stair by the Pantanassa in Mystra (photo by the author).
5. (p. 13) The church of St. Constantine in Lygourio near Epidauros (photo by the author).
6. (p. 13) West wall of the Panaghia Gorgoepikoos at Athens (photo by the author).
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14. (p. 26) Fragments of statues incorporated in the south wall of the courtyard of the bishop's palace in Mystra (photo by the author).
15. (p. 26) Sarcophagus with Bacchic scenes in the courtyard of the bishop's palace in Mystra (photo by the author).
16. (p. 28) Spolia exhibited on a wall of the courtyard of the monastery of Areias (photo by the author).
17. (p. 28) Ancient column used as basis for the *prothesis* in the church of St. Constantine in Paroikia in Paros (photo by the author).

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127. For the various messages which was conveying the conscious incorporation of ancient spolia in western mediaeval settings cf. M. Perry, "St. Mark's Trophies: Legend, Superstition, and Archaeology in Renaissance Venice," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 40 (1977), 27–49; W. Heckscher, "Relics of Pagan Antiquity in Medieval Settings," *ibid.* 1 (1937), 204–220, repr. in: William S. Heckscher, *Art and Literature. Studies in Relationship*, ed. E. Verheyen (Baden-Baden 1985), 31–51; A. Esch, "Spolien. Zur Wiederverwendung antiker Baustücke und Skulpturen im mittelalterlichen Italien," *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 51 (1969), 1–64; M. Vickers, "Wandering Stones: Venice, Constantinople, and Athens," in: K.-L. Selig, E. Sears, eds., *The Verbal and the Visual. Essays in Honor of William Sebastian Heckscher* (New York 1990), 225–247; M. Greenhalgh, *The Survival of Roman Antiquities in the Middle Ages* (London 1989); De Lachenal, *Spolia. Uso e riempiego dell'antico*, who offers a detailed analysis of the use of spolia in the West and discerns practical considerations, aesthetic and antiquarian motivations, and a Christian reinterpretation, each one manifested in different historical periods.